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Embassy of the United States of America

August 2, 1989

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UNCLASSIFIED
MEMORANDUM

TO: ECON - Jim Larocco
FROM: CON - Dee Robinson
SUBJECT: CODEL RUDMAN: Consular Operations

While some Embassy activities have slowed as a result of the crackdown on pro-democracy advocates, the consular section has faced continuing high demand for visa services. An average of 400-500 Chinese a day seek to apply for nonimmigrant visas. Because of the evacuation of dependents, we are operating without three fulltime American employees and without the five dependent summer hires we normally use during the peak summer visa season. Thus, we must limit the number of applicants each day to 250 to 300, depending on whether officers from other sections are available to assist with visa interviews. The Embassy has the largest nonimmigrant visa workload of our posts in China. The June 4 massacre has prompted a dramatic increase in the number of letters we receive about visa cases. We have received nearly 250 Congressional inquiries alone in the last six weeks, compared to the 25-30 we would normally get during that time frame.

The PRC authorities' decision to institute new exit visa procedures for Chinese nationals effective June 20 has had little impact on our visa workload. We continue to receive large numbers of student visa applicants, including persons from Beijing University and other top institutions. We have been unable to learn whether any persons issued U.S. visas have had problems obtaining the second PRC exit permit necessary to leave the country.

We had about 1,200 Americans residing in Beijing prior to the evacuation. The number is now down to about 300, including Embassy staff. We have had few reports of harassment of private Americans by local authorities. A group of Americans were detained briefly in Kunming for bringing religious materials into the country which the Chinese said violated PRC customs regulations, but there seems to have been no anti-American overtone to the incident. Many of the problems we are now working on are related to the evacuation, e.g., helping former residents recover property they were unable to take with them when they left Beijing.

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